

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-12 IO-13 EB-08 NRC-05
OES-07 SOE-02 DOE-15 CEQ-01 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01
STR-07 EPA-01 /122 W
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O R 051018Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9609
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS

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E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: PARM ENRG EEC
SUBJ: US-EURATOM RENEGOTIATIONS: FRENCH PRESS COMMENT

1. LE FIGARO OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, CARRIES STORY ON PAGE 9 ENTITLED "ENRICHED URANIUM: EUROPE THREATENED BY US EMBARGO". THE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE OF THE APRIL 4 VETO BY FRANCE OF EUROPEAN ACCEPTANCE OF OPENING RENEGOTIATIONS WITH THE US HAS INITIATED, WHAT WE EXPECT TO BE, A CONTINUING PUBLIC DISCUSSION PUSHING EUROPE TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE OF THE US ON CIVILIAN NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY AND SUPPLY. THE QUESTION OF RENEGOTIATION WILL AGAIN BE ADDRESSED AT THE COMMUNITY'S HEADS OF STATE MEETING APRIL 7 AND 8. WE WILL CONTINUE TO REPORT SIGNIFICANT PRESS COVERAGE OF THIS TOPIC IN FRANCE AS IT WILL BEAR UPON THE EVENTUAL RENEGOTIATION OF THE US-EURATOM AGREEMENT.

2. LE FIGARO ARTICLE OF APRIL 5: "ENRICHED URANIUM: EUROPE THREATENED BY US EMBARGO" (INFORMAL EMBASSY TRANSLATION)

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"YESTERDAY IN LUXEMBOURG FRANCE REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE OPENING OF DISCUSSIONS WITH THE US ON THE RENEGOTIATION OF THE US-EURATOM AGREEMENT AS PROPOSED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND ITS EIGHT PARTNERS.

"COMMUNITY CIRCLES ESTIMATE THAT THIS REFUSAL RISKS

BRINGING ABOUT AN AMERICAN EMBARGO ON DELIVERIES OF LOW ENRICHED URANIUM, INASMUCH AS A NEW LAW VOTED BY THE CONGRESS REQUIRES THAT A REINFORCEMENT OF CONTROLS ON TRANSPORTATION, STORAGE AND REPROCESSING OF ENRICHED URANIUM BE DECIDED BEFORE APRIL 10.

"THE FRENCH POSITION IS IN CONFORMITY WITH PRESIDENT Giscard's NUCLEAR POLICY ORIENTATION. THE PRESIDENT HAD AGREED AT THE WORLD SUMMIT IN LONDON TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERNATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE ATOMIC FUEL CYCLE ON THE CONDITION THAT EXISTING AGREEMENTS NOT BE QUESTIONED AGAIN.

"IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THIS THREAT OF EMBARGO WILL BE ENFORCED SINCE THE MOOD IS FOR NEGOTIATION MORE THAN FOR ECOLOGICAL-TYPE MEASURES. THESE MEASURES WOULD BE VERY LIMITED AND WOULD NOT HAMPER FRENCH NUCLEAR PLANTS DUE TO A LACK OF FUEL.

"1 - MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF ENRICHED URANIUM FOR FRENCH NUCLEAR PLANTS COMES FROM THE USSR. PARIS HAS ALWAYS TRIED TO DIVERSIFY ITS ENERGY SOURCES. THIS IS AS TRUE FOR LOW ENRICHED URANIUM AT 3 PERCENT AS FOR NATURAL URANIUM. CURRENTLY IT IS ESTIMATED THAT MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF OUR ENRICHED URANIUM COMES FROM THE USSR, THE OTHER HALF FROM THE U.S. THEREFORE IN CASE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF AN EMBARGO, WE WOULD HAVE A WIDE MARGIN FOR MANEUVER.

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"2 - THERE ARE SEVERAL MONTHS OF ENRICHED URANIUM STOCK. THIS IS ALSO TRUE FOR GERMANY WHICH IS MORE VULNERABLE THAN FRANCE IN THE CASE OF AN EMBARGO; IT HAS A 6-MONTH STOCK OF ENRICHED URANIUM.

"3 - IN LESS THAN 2 YEARS EURODIF PRODUCTION WILL ENSURE THAT FRANCE AND MANY OTHER COUNTRIES WILL BE COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT OF THE US. THE US IS PLAYING ITS LAST CARD, SINCE IN 1979 EURODIF WILL START PRODUCTION OF URANIUM, REACHING FULL CAPACITY IN 1981. FRANCE WILL HAVE ENOUGH ENRICHED URANIUM TO BE ABLE TO DO WITHOUT EXTERNAL SUPPLIERS. HOWEVER THE US THREAT OF EMBARGO COULD HAVE THREE SHORT-TERM CONSEQUENCES:

-- WASHINGTON COULD HARDEN ITS POSITION CONCERNING SUPPLY OF HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM FOR NUCLEAR RESEARCH REACTORS. SEVERAL SUCH REACTORS EXIST IN FRANCE WHICH ARE SUPPLIED BY THE US. PIERRLATTE COULD MAKE UP FOR

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AN EVENTUAL US EMBARGO BUT AT A MUCH HIGHER COST.

-- AMERICAN PRESSURES COULD INCITE THE SOVIETS TO INCREASE THEIR PRICES FOR LOW ENRICHED URANIUM WHICH ARE AT PRESENT LOWER THAN US PRICES.

-- EUROPEANS FACED WITH THE AMERICAN THREAT COULD HASTEN THEIR DECISION TO BUILD A SECOND EURODIF, I.E. COREDIF."
HARTMAN

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